

Learn More About ...

If you would like more information about pharmaceutical disposal, you may want to visit some of these links:

There are new federal guidelines for the proper disposal of unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs.

<http://whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press07/022007.html>

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has gathered sampling data that confirms the presence of pharmaceuticals in aquatic and terrestrial environments.

<http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc.html>

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has compiled information on potentially negative environmental impacts. www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/chemistry/pharma

Wastewater Agencies in the Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego area sponsored a "No Drugs Down the Drain" initiative. www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is making sure that parents, young adults and teens know the very real risks of misusing medicine. www.drugfree.org/Parent/Resources/Prescription_Medicine_Misuse

The Household Products Collections Center for the City of Tempe, AZ collects and disposes of household hazardous wastes, including medicines. However, this service is available only to local residents and proof of residency is required. www.tempe.gov/hhw/we_accept.htm

Contacts for Further Information



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Prescription Drug Disposal...

A Pain in the Drain



No Drugs Down the Drain



If you're like most people, you have accumulated a collection of drugs that are no longer needed. Once it was common practice to flush these medications (also known as pharmaceuticals) down the toilet.

We now know that these substances are bad for our environment – the ground, water and air around us. The federal government has released new guidelines which are designed to reduce the diversion of prescription drugs while also protecting the environment.

New Federal prescription drug disposal guidelines urge you to:

- Take unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers.
- Mix the prescription drugs with an undesirable substance like coffee grounds

or kitty litter, and put them in impermeable, nondescript containers such as empty cans or sealable bags, further ensuring that the drugs are not diverted or accidentally ingested by children or pets.

- Throw these containers in the trash.
- Flush prescription drugs down the toilet only if the accompanying patient information specifically instructs that it is safe to do so.
- Return unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs to pharmaceutical take-back locations for safe disposal.

Facts About Prescription Drug Disposal

- Unused medications improperly disposed of can cause serious problems to you and your environment.
- Research studies have shown that exposure to drugs found in waterways is having a serious, negative impact on fish and other aquatic life.
- When drugs are flushed, they can kill beneficial bacteria responsible for breaking down sewage in treatment facilities and damage septic systems.
- Drugs can be scavenged and illegally sold, or could poison children and animals.
- Pollution prevention (e.g., source elimination or minimization) is preferable to remediation or restoration to minimize both public cost and human/ecological exposure.

Why Should I Take the Time To Do This?

Properly disposing of unwanted medications may be inconvenient, but there are some very compelling reasons to do this in a safe and responsible manner.

● **Your environment – Please don't flush!**

Municipal sewage treatment plants are not engineered to remove pharmaceuticals. These untreated substances get released into waterways or groundwater along with the treated wastewater. Medicines can also destroy the beneficial bacteria that break down waste in septic systems.

● **Abuse is prevalent!**

Abuse of prescription drugs, particularly painkillers, has increased among teenagers and young adults due to the ease of obtaining drugs. Sixty per cent of the persons who abuse painkillers indicated that they received the drugs free from friends or relatives.

● **You can make a difference!**

Children, pets or scavenging animals could find the medication and ingest it. Drugs could be scavenged and illegally sold. Take action to minimize the threat of accidental poisoning or drug abuse. Let's take precautions now to avoid harm to future generations and the environment. Your participation is appreciated!